

Discovering Mae Hong Son

Mae Hong Son,

whose image for travelers,

has remained forever an unclear picture.

To them, the impression of Mae Hong Son caught in perpetuity with its perennial fog. Mae Hong Son has been nicknamed the "*Province of the three seasons fog*" or "*Muang Sam Mog*".

Once it was quite an adventure to drive to Mae Hong Son for its trail of winding roads boasting no less than 1,800 bends. Presently, new highways allow a pleasant and safe motor trip to Mae Hong Son.

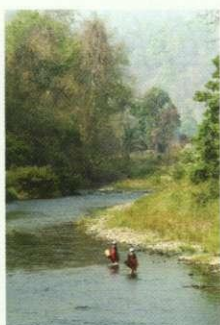


A tourism campaign under : The Mae Hong Son Development Strategy Project 2004



Once it would seem that the hardship alone in the traveling to the province might cut it off from the outside world. Its isolation formed an insurmountable barrier to outside influence, thereby preserving Mae Hong Son's own way of life, culture and tradition, as well as natural scenic mountainous terrain, making it Thailand's largest eco-tourism destination. It has proved to be popular with both Thai and foreign visitors.

Culturally, its past can be traced through artifacts, furniture, windowpanes and door panels at various temples. With its isolation as the only hold back, now, Mae Hong Son has taken its place among Thailand's best and unspoiled destinations.



General Information :

Bordering the Union of Myanmar in the northern part of Thailand 924 km. from Bangkok. Its area is approximate 13,000 sq. km., administratively divided into 7 districts which are : Muang Mae Hong Son, Mae Sariang, Khun Yuam, Pai, Mae La Noi, Sop Moei, and Pang Mapha.

- The north borders the Shan State of Myanmar.
- The south borders Tha Song Yang District of Tak Province.
- The east borders Mae Chaem District of Chiang Mai Province.
- The west borders Kaya State of Myanmar.

A brief history of Mae Hong Son



In 1851 Phra Chao Hotarapratet, the then ruler of Chiang Mai appointed **Chao Keaw Muang Ma** a group of experts to catch wild elephants. The posse crossed the mountain ranges westward of Chiang Mai where wild elephants were plentiful. Once enough elephants were caught, they traveled to a jungle community which area was a plateau and had a fine stream passing through, ideal for training the captured elephants. They decided to settle down and named the new village "**Mae Rong Son**", meaning a stream to train elephants, which was later evolved into "**Mae Hong Son**".

In 1856, to avoid tribal fighting, large numbers of Thai Yai Tribesmen migrated to Mae Rong Son, led by **Chao Fah Golan** and **Chan Kaleh**, who later becomes the favorite of **Paka Mong** through and by his services and helpfulness. He even was allowed to marry the daughter of the Paka Mong. **Chan Kaleh**, later move southward to the present Khun Yuam and become its first governor.

Phraya Singhanatracha Memorial

Commemorates the first ruler of Mae Hong Son. Chan Kaleh governed Khun Yuam town with prosperity that later the King of Lanna established him as ruler of Mae Hong Son in 1874.

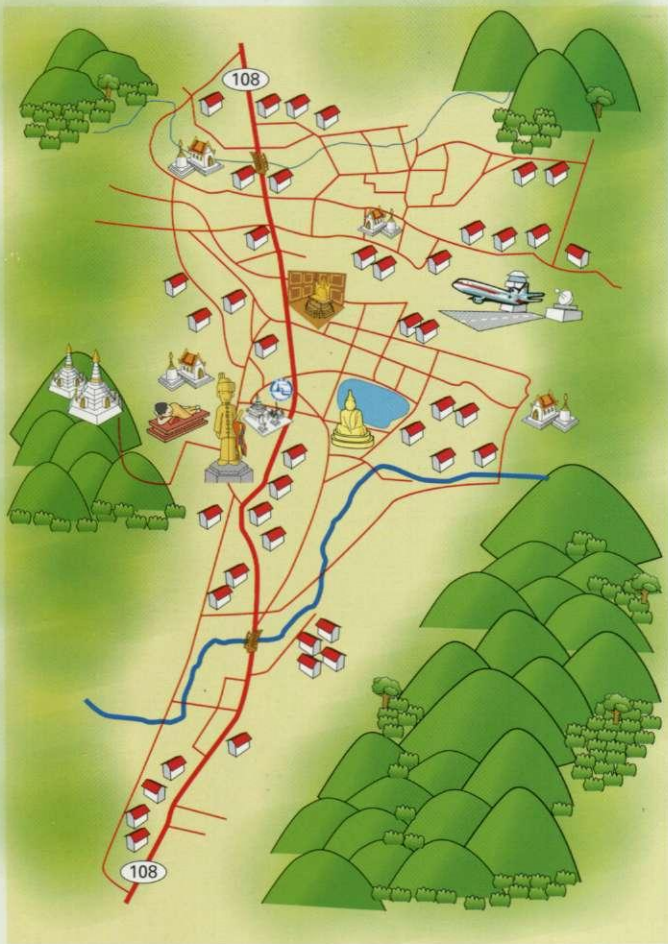


Provincial Emblem, depicting from the town origin being the watercourse in which one elephant is playing.

Tribal distributions

Mae Hong Son is home to several tribal groups including, the Thai Yai, Hmong, Muser, Lawa, Lisu, Karen and the Chinese.





Historical and Culture Attractions in Muang District.

Wat Phra That Doi

Kong Mu, the most important place of worship and provincial landmark, located on a hill west of town. There are two Burmese-style pagodas. The large one



was built in 1860 while the small one was erected in 1874. A panoramic view of Mae Hong Son can be enjoyed from the site.



Wat Phra Non (Reclining Buddha)

, located at the foot of Doi Kong Mu. It houses a 12 ft. long Buddha image mould in the Thai Yai style. A pair of large and regal lion statues stand shoulder

to shoulder at the steps leading to Wat Phra That Doi Kong Mu.

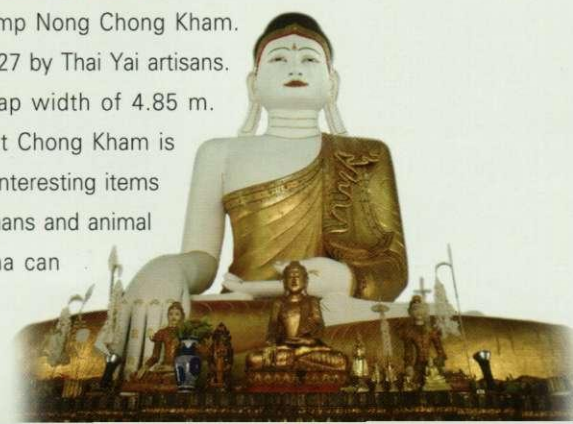
Wat Chong Kham and Wat Chong Klang Both temples are located on the bank of the swamp Nong Chong Kham.

Wat Chong Kham was built in 1827 by Thai Yai artisans.

A large Buddha image with a lap width of 4.85 m.

situated in the hall. Next to Wat Chong Kham is

Wat Chong Klang where several interesting items such as wooden figurines of humans and animal from the history of Lord Buddha can be found.



Wat Hua Weang or Wat Klang Weang. Has the distinction of housing the image of Phra Chao Pla-La-Khaeng, replicate from Phra Mahamunee in Mandalay, which is believed to be one of three most sacred symbols of worship in Myanmar all of which needed to pay homage to.



Wat Gum Goh, an ancient temple of the town, located opposite the Temple of the Reclining Buddha. Built in 1875, it also boasts the finest architecture works, especially the roofed passageway from the entrance arch to the hall.

Eco-tourism around the Muang Mae Hong Son district

Baan Nam Piang Din. Located in Tambol Pha Bong.

Visitors need to board long-tailed boats at Baan Huay Dua to travel to the terraced Lum Nam Pai. Scenes on both sides of canal are picturesque. Boats can be rented at Baht 500.- for 8 pax.



The Windmill Producing Sesame

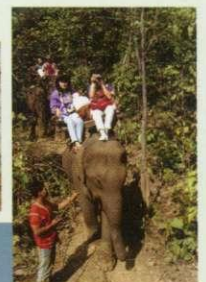
Oil at Baan Sob Soi. Located in Baan Sob Soi, 16 km. away from Muang Mae Hong Son District. A tour demonstrating how to extract sesame oil and rice

pounding by using water energy created by windmills can also be extended to include in a visit to the Long Neck Karen Village, 8 km. from Baan Sob Soi.

Rafting on the Pai River between Baan Sob Pong - Baan Tha Pong Daeng - Baan Huay Dua or between the suspension bridge and Baan Sob Bon. Short trips of 2-4 hours are suggested. Raft rental is Baht 400.-

Elephant Ride. A trip to enjoy trekking through beautiful scenery. Tourists can contact our operators at Baan Huay Dua Port, Tha Chang Mae Hong Son Resort and Saha Karn Deon Rue and Long-necked Karen Elephant Center.

Microwave Village. A Hmong village located at 1,000 m. above sea level and 32 km. on Highway 108 on Mae Hong Son - Khun Yuam to Baan Pa Lan, making a left turn for another 8 km. of high angle concrete road to reach the village. The local Hmong tribe in this village leads an easy life while upholding their old traditions.





Travel Trip on Mae Hong Son - Baan Mog Jam Pae

Route located along the 16 km. toward the north of Muang Mae Hong Son district. Numerous destinations on the Highway 1095 Mae Hong Son to Pang Mapha are :



Tham Pla An area surrounded by mountain ranges and forests, numerous large freshwater fish are seen, namely Pla Mung (or Pla Kang/Pla Pluang), swimming in the stream undisturbed by anyone.

Pha Sua Waterfall Pha Sua waterfall is located at 26 km. from Mae Hong son. There are six

levels compiling with interesting rock formations and water flows all year round, making it a perfect place to visit with only a short walk from the parking area.

Phu Klon Country Club. The natural black mud pond for healthy skin care that has become a famous destination. Phu Klon is now the popular place for health treatment and therapeutic, hence has been promoted as one of **Unseen Thailand**.



Pang Tong Palace. Another beautiful and easy access is the Pang Tong Royal Residence, located nearby the Pha Sua waterfall, an area with beautiful mountainous scenery with trees and flowers of various species.



Baan Rak Thai - Baan Ruam

Thai. These villages located at 44 km. from town near the Thai - Myanmar border. Baan Rak Thai is famous for Yunan dishes and excellent tea tasting, such as Sing-Sing and Oolong tea grown in this village, while at Baan Ruam Thai visitors can enjoy wonderful scenery of cool weather flowers.

Cabins and tents service is available for tourists.

Tourist Route 1095

The Mae Malai - Pai - Pang Mapha sector

Huay Nam Dang National

Park. The location of tributaries Development Project of the Forestry Department. It is one of the most popular sites in the country. One can view the sea of mist and admire many species of cool weather flowers. There are cabins and tents to accommodate tourists.



Pai Hot Springs. Surrounded by giant teakwood forests. Hot white steam covers the entire area. Some streams are as hot as 80°C. In Pai District there are other hot spring sites on the same route.

Pai River is the main river in Mae Hong Son. It is 180 km. long with clear water and sand and gravel base. In the summer one can go rafting

down the river towards Pai District.

Kong Laen. A large earth mound with sheare face caused by winds and water of nature.

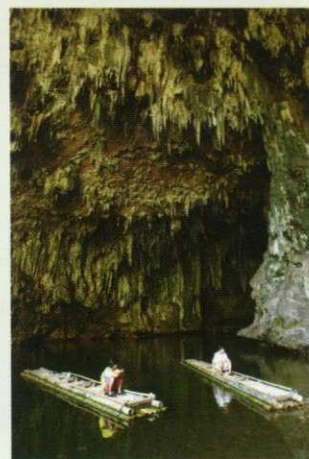
Pai District. A hub of standard resorts and fine restaurants. In the morning and evening, tourists like to stroll in the market place and persue the native way of life.



Wat Nam Hu, Wat Klang. About 3 km. from Pai Market, is the site of a sacred Chiang Saen Buddha image 500 years old, 24 inches wide at the base and 30 inches high. The image top knot can be opened and contains holy water, revered by local folks.



Pang Mapha District



Tham Nam Lod Wildlife and Nature Institute

is situated in the forest of Pang Mapha District, some 77 km. from town. Here nature creates an exotic subterranean wonder of darkness and mystery, that is the **Nam Lod Cave**. It has a brook run from the cave mouth through the other of the mountain, a route where visitors may travel by raft or by foot to explore the 1 km. long cave along which beautiful

stalactites and stalagmites can be found. Discovered also old remains of utensils and coffins. There are services provided for tourists to make an adventurous exploration. Another site in **Mae Lana Cave**, the stream inside the cave is habitat of eyeless and colorless fish that live in dark environment.



Baan Luk Kao Lham. A huge village of Hmong tribe, located 50 km. from Pai District on Highway 1095 and turn left toward the low valley.





Namtok Mae Surin
National Park

Wat Tor Pae

Khun Yuam District

Mae Yuam
Wildlife Sanc. HQ

Mae Sariang District

Salawin National Park

Wat Sri Boon Ruang

Baan Mae Sam Lab

Mae Ngao National Park

Bua Tong Field on Doi Mae U-Kor

Pha Phung Cave

Baan Nong Haeng Hot Spring

Keaw Komon Cave

Mae La Noi District

Baan Mae Um Long
Hot Spring

Namtok Mae Sawan Noi

Bua Tong Field on Doi Mae Hoh

Phra That Jom Thong

Sop Moei District

This card is ensured by

Mae Hong Son Office

To certify that vehicled

Registration number

Driven by

Has driven safely in Mae Hong Son on

Date / /

Tourist attractions on Highway 105, 108

Sop Moei - Mae Sariang - Mae La Noi - Khun Yuam - Mae Hong Son Routes

Mae Hong Son may be accessed from the South by two major routes, Highway 105 from Mae Sot District of Tak Province passing through Mae Ramad - Tha Song Yang - Sop Moei - Mae Sariang. Highway 108, newly expanded into a wider highway via the old route to Mae La Noi - Khun Yuam - Mae Hong Son, or take the Chomthong route via Highway 1009 to Doi Intanon. Turn left to Highway 1192 to Mae Chaem, Highway 1088 to Baan Mae Na Jon and Highway 1263 to Khun Yuam, then connect with Highway 108 to Mae Hong Son.

Sop Moei District



Mae Ngao National Park.

About 15 km. from Sop Moei, is an area rich in teakwood forests. Many streams flow through the area, notably, Mae Nam Ngao in which the surface is clear like glass, thus

named the Ngao River. Ngao means reflection. Certain sections of the Ngao River have different levels thus providing some fun rafting while admiring the scenery.

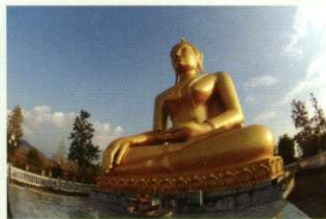
Baan Mae La Ma Luang. About 32 km. from Sop Moei (28 km. by car) and a further 5 km. on foot leads to a tribal village in picturesque surrounding.

Mae Sariang District

The largest district of the Province, it has also a long and colorful history of longer than 540 years, serving several times as a frontline defense in the history of the Lanna Thai Kingdom. Long time habitat of the Lawa and Karen tribes, originally called Muang Yuam but was renamed Mae Sariang after the river which flows through the District in 1924 by the authorized to differentiate it from Muang Khun Yuam.

Bua Tong Field on Doi Mae Hoh. Doi Mae Hoh is 20 km. from Mae Sariang town, beside the Highway 108, the Bua Tong will burst into full bloom in early winter, painting the valley with a golden yellow.

The Phra That Si Jom. It is the important four exotic Lanna art temples situated in each city corner : Jom Jeang, Jom Mon, Jom Kitti and Jom Thong. On the hilltop in the northeast of Mae Sariang, many people were enchanted by a scenic Mae Sariang Town view, peaceful with serene and pleasant atmosphere.



Wat Sri Boon Ruang. Located near Wat Chong Sung, it is distinguished by its unique metal perforated roof in the Thai Yai design.



Journeying The Salawin (Kong River). The water source originates from the Tibet highland and flows past China. It is the dividing line between Thailand and Myanmar.

The shores are of fine white sand and the scenery is charming. Tourists can travel down the river by long-tailed boat beginning from Baan Mae Sam Lab.

Mae La Noi District

Lawa Village is situated in the high hills where Mae Hong Son and Chiang Mai meet. The culture, architecture, customs and character of Lawa are different from other hill tribes in Thailand. The attractions of this village are its hilltop location with marvelous views. Visitors can easily go to the village as it is about 32 km. from the district.

Mae Sa Kua Karen Village. It is located at Tambon Thapha Phum about 13 km. from the district. Houses here are remarkably built along the slopes of the mountains. During dry season, it has beautiful scenery when wild flowers and foliage turn to orange. Near the village are waterfalls good for relaxation. The villagers still preserve their tradition ways.



Kaew Komon Cave. The glittering calcite shines in the cave. The feature of this cave is its sparking walls that are the result of calcite, making it look like shards of clear ice. The cave is located 5 km. from Mae La Noi District.

Khun Yuam District

Namtok Mae Surin National Park. The magnificent views of stone mountains cut through by streams, steep cliff, especially the waterfall of 100 meters high in the village of Baan Mae Surin make the trip to the park unforgettable. Traveling there in the season of the Bua Tong blooming, one can enjoy a marvel of scenery.



Bua Tong Field on Doi Mae U-Kor. Located in Baan Mae Surin, in the area of development of hilly forests, covers an area of 1,000 rais of wild Sunflowers, the Bua Tong will burst into full bloom in early winter, painting the valley with a golden yellow. Facilities such as camping tents, food shops and fresh coffee are available for tourists.

Wat Tor Phae. An old large Myanmar Vihara, located 7 km. from Khun Yuam market having a beautiful Mon style pagoda. According to the legend, it is said that this area was once used as a rest place and also a place to gather wood logs for assembling rafts. Later, the raft assembling people combined their efforts and built this temple and called it Wat Tor Phae... the "Raft Assembling Monastery."



Semi-adventure Touring with Four Wheel Drive Vehicle



Touring Mae Hong Son by off-road vehicle is a fun filled adventure experience. Travelers will see and enjoy exotic scenic and colorful hill tribe way of life. There are a number of routes for such a drive, namely :

- ✓ Baan Mae Chanin (Sameong District, Chiang Mai Province) - Bann Wat Chan (Off road 1)
- ✓ Mae Hong Son - Huay Hee - Baan Wat Chan (Off Road 1-2)
- ✓ Mae Surin Waterfall - Baan Nong Kheaw
- ✓ Baan Mae Ping (Pai District) - Baan Wat Chan (Off Road 2)
- ✓ Baan Tarn Jed Ton (Pai District) - Baan Muang Noi
- ✓ Baan Muang Pon (Khun Yuam District) - Baan Mae Surin
- ✓ Baan Mae Khatuan - Baan Mae Sam Lab (Sop Moei District)
- ✓ Baan Jor La Ku - Baan Mae La Kee (Sop Moei District)

Distance from Muang District town of Mae Hong Son to :

✓ Pang Mapha District	67 km.
✓ Pai District	111 km.
✓ Khun Yuam District	66 km.
✓ Mae La Noi District	113 km.
✓ Mae Sariang District	163 km.
✓ Sop Moei District	188 km.

Distance by Kilometres

✓ Chiang Mai - Pai	135 km.
✓ Pai - Pang Mapha	44 km.
✓ Pang Mapha - Muang Mae Hong Son	67 km.
✓ Muang Mae Hong Son - Khun Yuam	66 km.
✓ Khun Yuam - Mae La Noi	67 km.
✓ Mae La Noi - Mae Sariang	30 km.
✓ Mae Sariang - Sop Moei	25 km.
✓ Mae Sariang - Chiang Mai	191 km.

Events and Traditions

Tea Taste Festival. In February at Baan Rak Thai, there is a celebration of The Tea tasting festival to support the agriculture and tourism of their village. During the celebration, one can enjoy a horse ride trip around the village plus an opportunity to taste high quality tea and see show and play of the Yunan Chinese.

Poi Sang Long Tradition. This is the fact the celebration of novice ordainment ceremony of Thai Yai people believe as a highly merit earned than that of the ordainment for priesthood. It is usually held during March-April. Today this colorful procession has become a major tourist attraction in Mae Hong Son.



Loi Krathong - Thai Yai Festival. Held on the full moon night in the month of November. Villagers make "krathong" to float in rivers, filled with goods and utensils for merit making. Present days are seen with entertainments and Krathong contest with lamps and candles lit around the pond area.

Bua Tong Festival. In winter, the hillsides of Doi Mae U-Kor are filled with golden color of Bua Tong blooms. As gay as a daisy and almost as large as a sunflower, the Bua Tong only blossoms for Mae Hong Son Province to hold the Bua Tong Blossom Festival at Khun Yuam District every year from 1 November until 15 December.

Poi Loen Sib Ed Festival. Or Jong Para, an ancient custom of the Thai Yai people. In the morning, there is merit making, offering food to the priests at the Wat. In the evening there will be a thousand candle parade in conjunction with fun and entertainment to celebrate the end of the rainy season, after the Buddhist priests have to live in monasteries; the so-called Buddhist Lent, which begins about July and ends about October.

A tourism campaign under :

The Mae Hong Son Development Strategy Project 2004

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